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Dear Tony,

What I know of Jim Hougan's newest commercialization of untenable theories, packaged entertainingly, of course, is limited to your interesting and in some ways perceptive review in Sunday's Wx Post. I marked a couple of passages as I read it. The only "Secret Agenda" I perceive is unjustified and unfair criticism of the CIA that, in the end, will be helpful to it where it needs help right now, behind the scenes in the Congress. There it will vaporize Hougan's commercialization, and it will continue to be exempt from its unexposed guilty acts.

Believe me, I've read hundreds of thousands of pages of government records that were expected to be secret forever, and what the errant dearly love is to be able to demolish criticism. With a book, generally a few selections suffice, and they pick those that are easy marks.

When Watergate broke two different German publishers approached me to do a book, the second as soon as the first changed his mind. After the second made the same decision, I continued and I completed a rather poor draft, poor mostly because it was too smart-alecky, not from its content.

Hougan's theory that the Post limited itself to the White House only because of hatred of Nixon while "ignoring leads that might have shown that Hunt and McCord" were still CIA is complete nonsense. The Post limited itself, I agree, but its self-imposed limitation was to getting rid of Nixon by forcing him to resign. The same criticism can be made of the Senate committee and its staff.

The Post did ignore leads relating to the CIA, but not those made up by Hougan. These leads relate to other improper CIA domestic activity and quite possibly to the Mexican laundry. I came on them while tracing Hunt, almost entirely from public sources. I had only one secret source and I must continue to protect it.

The Post also ignored the CIA's connections to the efforts to impeach Justice Douglas, in which Hunt and other CIA types were engaged while still CIA. I have the proofs. I gave these and others to Bernstein, whose father had been a friend of mine, and to Woodward.

For some years Hunt was engaged in proscribed domestic activity. There is a prima facie case that this included blocking publication of my first book. It is known that the CIA fostered publication of books it wanted published, often had written, but nobody has ever undertaken to learn whether it flipped that coin and discouraged or prevented publication of books it did not want published. I think Hunt was involved in that. He had a cover address with a since defunct literary agency, with a direct tie to Washington so he could appear to be taking calls in New York City. He then also was with the Mullen Agency, again I have the proofs, and Helms' testimony about when Hunt was first connected with Mullen and how he got there is perjury. During that time, while still a CIA employee, he tried to start an agency of his own. He got at least as far as printing a letterhead I've seen. Colson also wanted him to run such an "agency" for the White House while he was still at CIA. I have that memo.

There was never a time when Hunt was on the lam that he was not in touch with or sheltered by CIA people, current or retired. They were, I am confident, protecting him to protect themselves. The CIA appears to have known where he was all the time he was hiding and to have withheld this from Justice.

On its part, Justice managed never to indicate to others what it had reason to believe is at least part of the content of those erased 18 minutes of tape. The coincidence in time makes it reasonably certain that it was what Pat Gray had about Hunt in Haldeman's hands about the time he and Nixon got back from Florida, as I recall the Monday morning after the breakin. I have this.

The Mullen Agency had a Mexico City office on the same street as the Mexican launderer of the accounted-for money. (Other money, like Vesco's, is not accounted for. Nor to the best of my knowledge was it ever traced. I have the serial numbers of all the bills Dorothy Hunt had with her when her plane crashed, and if I had them the government could have, and it could have traced them. Most were large enough.) The same street may not have any meaning, but a tracing of phone numbers could, and if I remember correctly I have Mullen's. Along with the name of a man who used it and a Mullen cover address and who disappeared from Washington when Watergate broke and has never been mentioned publicly.

There is much that is unexposed, but Hougan merely hides it by seeking to leave a false scent for any journalistic bloodhounds. So I welcome your comment that mixed in with what may be information is "questionable, even reckless, assumptions about motive and purpose."

You conclude with the suggestion that his book "should lead to a reexamination and reassessment of important parts of the story." By whom you do not suggest, and I believe there is no possibility that this could be by the Congress or Justice. However, why not Newsday? It has done some great investigative reporting in the past. My advanced age and serious health problems preclude my ever using what I've done on this. If you are interested, you are welcome to everything I have, subject only to the protection of a single source. There were some leaks to me, but they were anonymous, so I do not mean them.

There is a mystery, too: why did Tad Szulc, then with the Times, but not for long after it, protect Hunt by misidentifying him as Barker? This interested me, although almost everyone ignored it. (Except, perhaps, the Times.) So I read his books, and I was surprised that they dealt with CIA operations in a manner that would please at least part of the CIA. Cuba, Dominician Republic. And then I found that in Who's Who he does not account for some years. Provocative, if nothing else, I think.

If you are interested, I cannot travel except in a real emergency, when it wears me out. I haven't driven out of Frederick since before we first spoke. I can walk limited distances and drive locally, but that is it.

Best wishes,

Harold

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